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The Corporation of The City of London
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Water Chemistry Changes to Reduce Lead Levels

Starting later this month, the City of London will implement minor changes to London's water supply to minimize the uptake of lead from lead service pipes in plumbing. These changes are intended to reduce lead levels in the ten per cent of London homes with older lead water services.

The chemical changes to London's water are one of three strategies the City of London is using to address lead issues and to maintain high quality, clean drinking water. The other components include ongoing education and awareness to educate homeowners who have lead pipes and to provide information about replacing the pipes; and the lead pipe replacement program. The City has recently developed a loan program to assist homeowners so that they can have the cost of pipe replacements added to their property tax bill and paid back over ten years.

Following investigation with an environmental consultant, City staff have determined that increasing pH levels within allowable limits will reduce the lead uptake that is causing elevated lead readings in some homes.

"We're confident that these small changes will significantly reduce the amount of lead in homes with older lead service pipes", said Pat McNally, Director - Water Environment & Customer Relations. "We're very pleased to have found ways of reducing the impact of lead, and will continue in our efforts to mitigate lead in the water, while at the same time ensuring excellent water quality as it relates to over 140 other parameters covering chemical, physical and microbiological characteristics."

The City of London has already established an enhanced monitoring program to evaluate the effectiveness of the changes. The procedure and sample group criteria were determined in consultation with water industry experts engaged by the MOE.

While individuals will not notice any change in the taste or smell of the water, water customers in the commercial, industrial and institutional sectors have been given advance notice, as the changes may impact those who use water as a process ingredient or for heating and cooling systems.

The City of London's drinking water system continues to meet or exceed Ontario Ministry of the Environment standards.